Over the past several decades, Zambia has undertaken numerous education reforms with an eye to attaining universal primary education and improving education quality. Substantial progress has been achieved in school access, and Zambia has nearly met the goal of universal primary education. Zambia's Ministry of Education continues to be committed to monitoring the quality of learning and to using assessment results to make evidence-based reforms.

**CONTEXT**

Obtained better system-wide data on student learning and is disseminating it more effectively

Zambia improved the quality of its existing National Large-Scale Assessment (NLSA) for grade 5 and developed a new NLSA for grade 9. Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) and key education stakeholders came together to devise a broad-reaching communications plan for disseminating the 2012 NLSA results in ways that would raise awareness about learning outcomes and motivate stakeholders to take action.

Increased the fairness of the examination process

Zambia improved the quality of its examinations for grades 7, 9, and 12. For example, the ECZ trained more than 1,200 teachers and other Ministry of Education staff on how to conduct an assessment framework and syllabi for key subject areas (English, Mathematics, and Science) thereby improving the alignment of the examinations with Zambia’s current curriculum and national learning goals.

Enabled evidence-based education policy and ensured sustainability of assessment reforms through raising capacity of key stakeholders

Zambia enhanced the capacity of key education stakeholders working on NLSA activities, driving forward policy change. Along with benefitting ECZ staff, Education Standards Officers, other representatives from the Ministry of Education, and teachers, such capacity-building activities reached more than 1,600 key education actors, effectively increasing their ability to understand and carry out national assessment activities.

Improved the quality of schooling by raising school standards and making school inspections more rigorous

A series of three-day workshops were held to train all 360 Standards Officers in the country on the principles of assessment and school inspections. The impact of the workshops continues to this day, as individual provinces provide training and refresher courses to new Standards Officers on an as-needed basis.

Benchmarked student learning to countries outside of Africa for the first time

In 2013, Zambia was selected to be one of six initial pilot countries to participate in the Program for International Student Assessment for Development (PISAD). ECZ representatives participated in international workshops organized to discuss the development of the PISAD tools with the other pilot countries, donor groups, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Raised the quality of teaching by ensuring better preparation of new teachers in classroom assessment

Zambia improved teachers’ capacity to conduct classroom assessment activities by incorporating a pre-service course on classroom assessment into the existing curriculum in all pre-service teacher training institutions, ensuring that pre-service teachers learn the requisite skills and can use assessment results to support teaching and learning in the classroom.

**FOCUS AREAS OF READ TRUST FUND GRANT SUPPORT**

**Strengthening capacity of institutions responsible for measurement**

**Ensuring effective use of assessment information**

**Enhancing the quality of high-stakes examinations**

**AS A RESULT OF THE READ TRUST FUND, ZAMBIA:**

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Leveraged the impact of the READ 1 Trust Fund program to continue improving learning outcomes and strengthening the student assessment system

In August 2017, the World Bank approved an IDA grant of $60 million to the Government of Zambia as part of the new Education Enhancement Project for Zambia that is aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and science in targeted primary and secondary schools and increasing equitable access to secondary education. As part of this project, the World Bank is supporting country capacity to implement and use international large-scale assessment data to inform teaching and learning.